

and reported on by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. As one of the items on the agenda of a regular session of the General Assembly, the budget, as presented and explained by the Secretary-General, together with the report and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, is given to the Fifth (Administrative and Budgetary) Committee for detailed examination and discussion. The Fifth Committee's recommendation is then considered in plenary session where final approval is given to the budget, which, because of changes made and agreed to during the various stages of study, is usually for a somewhat different amount than that originally submitted. As might be expected with a budget being reviewed by some 80 member delegations, many divergent opinions are expressed and emphasis is placed on a wide variety of items by the different members and groups. There is therefore a very careful and thorough scrutiny of the budget.

A matter of considerable interest in relation to the budget is the new form in which it is presented for 1958<sup>1</sup>. This change was approved at the eleventh session in 1957 on an experimental basis for two years. While it makes a detailed comparison with 1957 by section impracticable, it is considered to have many technical advantages over the old form, which should simplify the accounting to some extent.

During the twelfth session the Fifth Committee gave more than the usual amount of attention to the public information activities of the United Nations with the result that a group of six experts is to be set up to undertake an objective study of the work of the Department of Public Information and to appraise and report on the effectiveness of its results. The countries designated to nominate experts to this group were Egypt, India, U.S.S.R., United Kingdom, United States and Uruguay.

Provision was made in the 1958 budget for a small group of staff to review the administrative and financial aspects of the activities of the several United Nations offices in various parts of the world.

Another matter which received special attention at the twelfth session was the planning of meetings and conferences of the United Nations. A resolution deciding to set up a fixed pattern of conferences from January 1, 1958 for a period of five years and to hold conferences and meetings in most cases at the headquarters of the bodies concerned was adopted on December 13, 1957. It is expected that this will result in a more rational and economical use being made of the resources of the United Nations.

An item of sufficient importance to attract considerable discussion at the twelfth session was that of the substantial increase in the production of documentation which had been taking place for several years and which reached a record peak in 1957. By resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to present documents as concisely as possible, and to set as a target for 1958 a reduction of 25 per cent from the 1957 volume.

As a further means of reducing costs through increased efficiency, it was agreed at the twelfth session to establish a small staff in the office of the Controller to strengthen control over branch offices and missions of the United Nations.

In the field of capital and maintenance costs it was also agreed that the Secretary-General would develop a long-range plan for capital improvements including estimates of costs and that this plan would be examined at

<sup>1</sup>See Appendix V for the 1957 Budget and Appendix VI for the 1958 Budget in the new form.